(b) Government have taken several steps to boost exports to these countries. They are :

(i) Separate trade agreements and protocols have been signed with the majority of the republics of the erstwhile Soviet Union.

(ii) Greater marketing thrust in the changed economic environment including more effective participation in Trade Fairs, Exhibitions, Buyer-Seller Meets, etc.

(iii) Promotion of direct contracts at the commercial enterprises level.

(iv) Greater emphasis on new forms of cooperation, such as joint ventures.

A liberal counter-trade mechanism has been put into place by the Ministry of Commerce enabling importers/exporters to buy commodities like certain types of fertilizers, non-ferrous metals, steel items, metal scrap and newsprint through the counter trade regime.

Crisis in tea industry

557. SHRI G. G. SWELL : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the tea industry is facing a crisis;

(b) whether the cost of production of one kg. of tea is more than its sale price;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor, and

(d) whether Government are taking any remedial measures in this regard ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED) : (a) The tea industry is facing difficulties on account of reduced purchases by the CIS countries, which were a major buyer of Indian tea during the previous years. There has also been a loss of production to the extent of 28.60 Million Kgs. during the period January to September, 1992 as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year.

(b) Estimated cost of production of tea during 1992-93 on all India basis at Rs. 38.93 per kg. is lower than the all India average auction price during April to October, 1992 at Rs. 39.90 per kg.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Export of rice to Cuba

558. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have since decided to export rice to Cuba;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if the answer to Part (a) above be in the negative, the reasons thereof ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. An agreement between Food Corporation of India and Empresa Cubana Importadora De Alimentos Alimport Hawana, Cuba was signed on 30-9-92 for export of 10,000 MT of rice to Cuba. 10,177.18 MT of rice have since been exported.

Dunkel proposals

559. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to agreee to the Dunkel proposals; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED) : (a) and (b) Government have not yet taken a final view on the proposals of Director General, GATT, with regard to the Uruguay Round of Negotiations. Government propose to initiate a full debate in Parliament on this subject, and a final view would only be taken thereafter.

Increase in export earnings

560. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been substantial increase in the export